

Why change? Mayoral selection works fine

If it isn't broken, don't fix it. That old - and true - saying is going through our minds as we listen to the debate about how the mayor is elected in Farmington Hills.

Council members currently choose a new mayor and mayor pro-tem from their ranks once a year. The new mayor becomes the *ex-officio* leader of the council as well as the lucky man or woman who gets to represent the city at various social functions.

Otherwise, the mayor and mayor pro-tem are ordinary council members with one vote each.

About once a year, the Hills council discusses the idea of having the voters elect a mayor directly. This year the proposal may even be on the November ballot.

We like the present system. It works just fine, we think, and there's no reason to change.

We agree with the present mayor, Larry Lichtman, who called the proposal "a regressive step" at a recent council meeting, adding that "it would be less honest and less efficient."

Frankly, we don't like what we've seen of some so-called "strong mayors" in other suburbs. Too often, the office of mayor becomes a political power base constructed by an egotistic pol.

But with the Hills' system, everyone on the council eventually gets to be mayor and play the leadership role - without getting too attached to the position. It works just fine. No changes are needed.

Honored teens are deserving

We'd like to say a few more words about this community's 18 outstanding young people, honored recently for their volunteer spirit by Farmington Youth Assistance, before they become part of Farmington-area history.

The 18 were feted last month at the annual Youth Assistance Breakfast at the Farmington Hills Activities Center. The honorees, all top students with bright futures, seem to have something important in common - they help others through volunteer work.

Their exploits were detailed on page 11A of the June 2 Farmington Observer.

Now, if we've heard it once, we've heard it . . .

well, too many times from the community: "You're always writing about kids who get in trouble, while the good ones never seem to get a line."

It's an old complaint, and sometimes a valid one. Of course, you don't praise someone for not robbing a bank. But, considering the 18 FYA honorees and their many accomplishments, a line or two more is definitely in order. These people, at a very early age, have truly maximized their potential.

Youth recognition awards go to "kids who have gone beyond the call of duty," said Oakland County Probate Judge Joan Young, who presented the awards. "These 18 definitely meet that criterion."

Honor dad on his special day

Sunday is Father's Day and dads throughout the Observer area will be treated like royalty - if only for a day. The first Father's Day was celebrated in Spokane, Wash., in 1910.

The idea of setting aside a special day to honor fathers was that of Spokane native Sonora Smart Dodd. She wanted to honor her own father, a widower, who had devoted 21 years to raising six children.

Father's Day was not declared a national holiday until 1972, when President Richard M. Nixon signed a congressional resolution declaring the third Sunday in June as Father's Day.

Father's Day is the fifth largest card-sending holiday of the year, according to American Greetings. An estimated 102 million Father's Day cards will be sent this year.

In honor of Father's Day, a Connecticut re-

search firm conducted a poll and reported the top 10 answers to this question:

"When you think of advice or typical things that fathers say, what expressions come to mind?"

The top 10 answers were:

1. Be careful.
2. Do the best you can.
3. Great job.
4. When I was a kid . . .
5. Do as I say, not as I do.
6. Get a good education.
7. How was your day?
8. What did your mother say?
9. Your mother is always right.
10. I'm proud of you.

Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

To all the dads out there in Observerland, Happy Father's Day!

Congratulations, graduates!

As a community newspaper we devote a lot of space to the good things that young people are doing. And now, at the close of the commencement season, we take this opportunity to congratulate members of the Class of 1994.

We remind the general reading public that these are the same kids you have read about the past few years because of their academic accomplishments and their athletic prowess. They are the teen-agers who volunteer in local nursing homes, spend time at inner-city soup kitchens, and volunteer in a wide range of activities helping others.

To members of the Class of 1994, as you

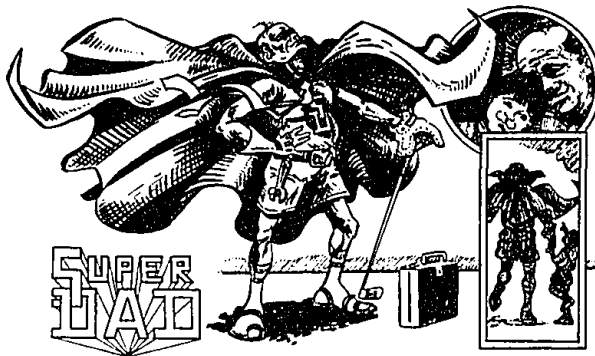
leave high school and head on to new challenges, we remind you that education and training will be the key to your financial success in a changing economy.

While you are studying hard in whatever higher education endeavor you elect, take time to give back to your community and thank those who have helped you along the way - parents, teachers, sisters, brothers.

And remember the words one local principal delivered to her soon-to-be graduates: "Today's world is crying out for healing, peace and charity."

Let it begin with you.

MARVIN TEEPLES



LETTERS

What about them?

As I passed the Farmington Police Department and City Hall on Sunday morning, June 12, I was surprised to see the sprinkler system going full blast. Didn't the watering ban apply to them, or was there no one to cite them?

Bill Stringer, Farmington

No 'mayor-for-life'

Despite a groundswell of widespread opposition, certain members of the Farmington Hills City Council have decided we should place a proposal on the ballot to elect the mayor at large.

I believe this would set the stage for a "mayor-for-life" situation, create a city political "machine" and give the city the types of problems that have plagued Detroit and Warren among others.

We have a city manager with two assistant city managers doing an excellent job. The present form of city government works very well with the office of mayor largely ceremonial.

A very hard look should be taken at the motives of the proponents of this proposal as well as their personal political agendas and how they might benefit personally from such a change.

Ronald Oliverio, Farmington Hills
Ethics Committee

A great job

Many thanks for your positive article about the First Presbyterian Church of Farmington at the time of its 40th Anniversary and the celebration of the dedication of our new addition.

You did a wonderful job of capturing the mood of the congregation and its future dreams. Such an article is most helpful both for the membership as well as the community at large.

I appreciate your efforts in bringing more and more local features to us, your readers. Again, my thanks and the thanks of the church's membership.

The Rev. Brewster H. Gere, pastor,
First Presbyterian Church

It's about greed

In January, I (and others I am sure) contributed to the Ashley Ponke Fund. I now wonder if it would be more equitable to have put this money in a defense fund for Dr. Alan Bredin.

I truly regret that a 9-year-old child has

been put in this horrific situation. There are many friends of Jackie Ponke (including Dr. Bredin) who would never allow Ashley to be in need financially.

But the greed of adults in this sue-happy society is disgraceful, and it is time for some of us to speak out. They are just not intelligent enough to understand that insurance covers nothing.

Even if there were a type of insurance to cover such a suit, the money still comes out of the insured's pocket, the insurance company is merely a middleman. This is extremely personal.

This action is disgraceful, disrespectful to the memory of Jackie Ponke. It's unconscionable to place Dr. Bredin in the same category as Raymond Ponke.

Jackie N. Elliott, Farmington Hills

What a fact!

It's a well-documented fact, that if we ban all guns on the streets, then there won't be crime, burglary, mugging, rape or holdups of any kind in America.

How's that for a solution to the problem? This is the result of consultations and conferences by our Congress people in Washington.

Leon I. Scholchit, Farmington Hills

Let's stay out

My classmates and I are talking about the North and South Korean problem.

What we are talking about is if you should send troops into South Korea or not because of the suspicion that we think North Korea has nuclear weapons. I think we should not be in South Korea because of all the risks we are taking.

I think this because if North Korea drops the bomb on our troops in South Korea we will be poisoned from the bomb if it is an A-bomb.

When our troops come back to America, if they have a baby it could be poisoned from the A-bomb. That could cause a lot of problems like if what that baby grows up it could have a baby and that baby too could also have poison in its system.

I also think that we should not be in South Korea because of all the lives that could be lost. I have one more reason why we should not be there. If we send a lot of our troops to South Korea, North Korea could tell their allies to bomb us in America and we would not have enough troops to fight them off.

Again, I think we should not be in South Korea because of all the lives and risks we are taking.

Brian J. Grohman, Farmington Hills

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What did you do to restrict water use during the recent water emergency?



"Nothing . . . and I was surprised that my condo's sprinkler system was still going."
Mary Ann Peters
Southfield



"I'm not watering my lawn . . . I promise."
Marilyn Rals
Farmington Hills



"I live in an apartment so I didn't have to do anything. But I use very little water anyway."
Richard Murray
Farmington



"We watered our yard by hand, rather than using the entire sprinkling system."
Jim Kelmig
Livonia

We asked this question at the downtown Farmington Branch of the Farmington Community Library.

The Farmington Observer

Tom Bask, Community Editor, 477-5450
Susan Rohrer, Managing Editor, Observer Newspapers, 953-2149
Pete Knoepfel, Advertising Manager, Observer Newspapers, 953-2177
Larry Genser, Manager of Circulation, Observer Newspapers, 953-2234
Steve Barnhart, Publisher, Observer Newspapers, 953-2100
Mark Lewis, Group Manager, Regional Advertising and Editorial, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 953-2100
Dick Brady, Vice-President, General Manager, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 953-2252

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